



Pickens County First Steps Partnership *Fiscal Year 2009 Annual Report*

Board Chair:
Randy Bowers
Executive Director:
Marilyn Madden
Contact Information:
PO Box 1113
Central, SC 29630
Phone: 864.654.3000
Fax: 864.654.3000
E-mail:
mmadden@scfirststeps.
org
Web site:
www.scfirststeps.org

**Total children in county under
age 6: 7,727**

**Total Children in county
living in poverty: 15.4%**

Pickens County Highlights

- Partners like the United Way are increasing school readiness.
- Local childcare centers improved quality
- Hundreds of children increased their reading skills in dozens of 4K classrooms.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

This year we took lemons and made lemonade. Despite the economic recession that impacted our budget with a 21% cut we were able, due to strong partner alliances, to provide high quality services to our children under five. As we reflect on the first decade of Pickens County First Steps (PCFS) we are challenged by an economic downturn yet buoyed by the extent of shared alliance for the cause of early childhood care and education. The research and initiatives established have given us invaluable insight into the best solution for education success—start early and use a systemic approach.

The data on children at-risk contained in this report indicate that Pickens County has too many without a healthy start. Low birth weights, high teen parenting, low maternal education, and poverty contribute to developmental delays and low language acquisition that resources, early assessment, and strategic interventions can combat. School success must be met with a strong foundation to strengthen the education continuum. Children at-risk ages 0-3 must have assets in place early so they can compete as they climb that continuum.

Our report this year contains our program data, successes, and the hundreds of children we have provided with needed services. I want to especially thank our program staff working daily with these children and their families. They are the ones who are making a difference. Legislators, business professionals, service agencies, and community advocates on and off our local board are to be commended as well for their tireless support of PCFS. Our priority remains the success of children who are the future of Pickens County.

Sincerely,
Marilyn Madden
Executive Director
Pickens First Steps

First Steps to School Readiness Strategy Areas

The First Steps initiative approaches children's school readiness needs in five ways:

Family Strengthening: A parent is a child's first and best teacher. First Steps works to help parents become the best parents they can be. First Steps also helps parents further their own education.

Healthy Start: Children's development and ability to learn are profoundly impacted by their health in the earliest years. First Steps works to help families understand children's health needs through education and screenings while also working to help them access needed health services.

Quality Child Care: Quality child care provides immediate and long-term learning benefits for children. First Steps works to expand the availability of quality child-care to families and to enhance the level of quality in existing child-care environments.

Early Education: Research shows that children who participate in high-quality preschool classes are more likely to start school ready to learn, as well as be more successful later in life. First Steps works to expand high-quality 3-year-old and 4-year-old kindergarten opportunities in public and private settings.

School Transition: The transition into kindergarten is a critical time that sets the tone for children's perspectives about the school years, as well their parents' perspectives. Making a strong initial connection between school and home -- and supporting both parents and students during this transition time -- has been shown to impact students' later school success and parents' later involvement during the school years.

2008-09 Pickens County Partnership **Programs by Strategy**

FAMILY STRENGTHENING

Family Literacy/Parents as Teachers

Program description: School District-based parenting and family strengthening program combined with Family Literacy that provides Parents as Teachers to qualified target families in need of parenting skills whose children are ages 0-5 and at risk for school readiness deficiencies. Full-time trained Parent Educators provided weekly home visits and monthly workshops to qualified participating families to improve quality of parenting skills, child interactions, and emergent literacy skills.

Program results:

- 54 at-risk families were served
- 60% of participant adults and children met the requirements for pre and post KIPS assessments
- 96% of these families met the frequency requirement for visits
- 96% of these families met the duration requirement for visits
- 1190 home visits were conducted
- 3 average monthly visits per family occurred exceeding the state requirement of 2

QUALITY CHILD CARE

Child Care Leadership Training Institute (CCLTI)

Program description:

CCLTI is an onsite technical assistance program to Registered or Licensed childcare centers that need hands-on assistance to enhance quality of care for preschool aged children. A certified and qualified Technical Assistant provided guidance based on baseline ERS scores to four centers over the course of 12 months. The goal is to work systemically with the center to improve quality and raise ERS scores to a rating of Good or 5 on the Environment Rating Scale (ERS).

Program results:

- 4 childcare centers participated
- 2 final-year centers graduated from the program
- 2 centers began their first year of TA

- 100% of classroom ERS scores improved quality for 220 children
- 400 hours of on site technical assistance was provided by 2 Certified TAPs

EARLY EDUCATION.

Half-Day Public 4K

Program description:

Public Half-Day 4K provided to a minimum of 60 children specific to all Office of First Steps 4K guidelines and criteria. Early Childhood Certified teachers and their assistants provided half-day 4K to at-risk children in underserved areas of Pickens County under contract with the School District of Pickens County.

Program results:

- 60 children were served
- 100% of at-risk families received the required home visits
- 100% of these children met standards and progressed to 5K
- 100% of these families participated in our integrated Book Flood early literacy program

EARLY EDUCATION

Book Flood/Reach Out and Read

Program description:

Book Flood is a combination of Reach Out and Read (ROR) where medical providers gift books to qualified children at well-child visits and Book Flood which is a systematic program of integrating early literacy read-aloud books to public and private 4K classrooms across the county.

Program results:

- 799 at-risk children were served
- 93% of at-risk families agree that during the Book Flood they increased the number of minutes they read aloud to their four-year-old child
- 95% of at-risk families agree that their four-year-old reads more often now due to the Book Flood
- 90% of teachers agreed that the Book Flood does add to their students' literacy skills or awareness
- 990 books were given out to children on doctor's visits in the ROR program

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

<u>Expenditures</u> By Funding Source	
State Appropriation (<i>Fund 10</i>)	\$218,761
E.I.A. Appropriation (<i>Fund 55</i>)	\$23,910
Lottery Appropriation (<i>Fund 35</i>)	\$0
C.D.E.P.P. Appropriation (<i>Fund 60</i>)	\$0
C.O.E. Appropriation (<i>Fund 65</i>)	\$0
N.F.P. Appropriation (<i>Fund 70</i>)	\$0
State Private (<i>Fund 15</i>)	\$3,290
Local Private (<i>Fund 20</i>)	\$3,375
Federal (<i>Fund 30</i>)	\$56,675
In-Kind (<i>Fund 25</i>)	\$92,000
TOTAL:	\$398,011

<u>Expenditures</u> by Program / Strategy Name	
Public 4K	\$92,518
Family Literacy	\$30,198
Parents As Teachers	\$161,560
Book Flood	\$23,791
Childcare Leadership Training Institute	\$52,856
	\$
	\$
Indirect Programmatic Functions	\$17,460
Administrative Functions	\$19,628
TOTAL:	\$398,011

NOTABLE DONORS

<i>DONOR'S NAME</i>	AMOUNT
United Way of Pickens County	\$5,000
	\$
	\$
TOTAL:	\$5,000

Local Match Percentage for FY 2009: 46%
(At least 15% Legislative requirement)

PICKENS COUNTY **PARTNERSHIP BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Chris Bowers	Transportation
Randy Bowers	Legislative Delegate (Chair)
Susan Childers	PreK Educator
Harriett Clamp	Legislative Delegate
Essie Clark	Business
Sharon Corn	Head Start
Amanda Dow	Legislative Delegate
Keith Frazier	DSS
Sheryl Hopkins	DHEC
Lisa Howard	Early Childhood Education
Lee Johnson	Business
Carlton Lewis	Early Childhood Education
Shelly Marchbanks	Preschool
Erin Marsh	Parent of a Preschooler
Cortni Nations	Non-Profit
Cheryl Steadham	Family Education
Margaret Stephens	Health
Carole Walters	Legislative Delegate
Kathy Young	Childcare

COUNTY DATA SNAPSHOT

In FY09, First Steps County Partnerships statewide made it a priority to become increasingly data-driven. County Partnerships successfully began using powerful new components of the First Steps data system, and County Partnerships also utilized data in new ways to drive their FY09 program plans. In addition to enhanced program data tracking, County Partnerships are also focusing on the best available data about children and families to best understand their communities' needs. At the end of FY08 and the beginning of FY09, County Partnerships began an extensive analysis of this data, including data about the risk factors known to impact children's potential school success, such as low birth weight, teen mothers, and families living in poverty. A county-level risk data report is included in the subsequent pages of this report.

Your 2008 School Readiness Risk Profile will be inserted by OFS after this section. For your reference, a PDF of this risk profile was sent to you along with your Annual Report Template

The SC General Assembly created in 1999 the South Carolina First Steps to School Readiness Initiative as a “comprehensive, results-oriented initiative for improving early childhood development by providing, through county partnerships, public and private funds and support for high quality early childhood development and education services for children by providing support for their families’ efforts toward enabling their children to reach school ready to learn”...here's what happened next:

First Steps Strategy Areas	Notable Moments
Family Strengthening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over the decade hundreds of at-risk families have advanced their parenting skills, increased their understanding of appropriate child development, and improved their education and career success through our partnership with the School District of Pickens County to provide Family Literacy and Parents as Teachers and matching funds. • Federal Even Start funds provided more services in the first part of the decade that allowed for many more families to be served. • Scores have earned GEDs • ESOL certificates have been earned by several parents • Hundreds of children have moved from being developmentally delayed to appropriate
Healthy Start	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PCFS was a key advocate in forming Pickens County Health Partners an alliance focused on community health. We assessed the county to determine health needs and learned among many things that dental care and access

	<p>for our at-risk preschoolers is an issue in Pickens County. Discussions on how to fill this gap are ongoing.</p>
<p>Quality Child Care</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the first year we established an innovative professional forum for private childcare centers in the county known as the Childcare Leadership Training Institute (CCLTI). It provides onsite training and technical assistance (TA) to dozens of Pickens County childcare centers that are providing a warm, safe, and educational setting for half of the children in the county ages 0-5 while their parents work. The centers we have partnered with have made tremendous improvements in classroom structure, health and safety practices, and increased skills and knowledge regarding early care and developmental guidance and milestones. The United Way of Pickens County provided matching funds to draw down one time State Lottery money to increase these services to childcare centers. • A dozen childcare centers have earned a rating of good on their ITERS and ECERS scores with our TA work.
<p>Early Education and School Transition</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong alliances with the School District, the United Way of Pickens County, Head Start, and private childcare centers were formed in the first year and

	<p>continued throughout these 10 years to Jump Start hundreds of 5K students into first grade reducing retention, to establish skills in literacy for thousands of 4K students and their families with a Book Flood, and to eliminate developmental lags and delays in hundreds of students in the northern part of the county with years of high quality 4K classroom funding.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One classroom at Holly Springs Elementary School is NAEYC accredited. • The School District of Pickens County was able to help us draw down State Lottery funds for 4K one year. • Partners like United Way of Pickens County have provided funds over the past 10 years for the flooding of books to thousands of at-risk four-year-olds who read the books nightly with their families. • Reach Out and Read and our partners at Easley and Clemson Pediatrics promote reading by giving a book and a prescription to read to children who seek care in their offices.
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